

BIDDERS' WEBINAR

Request for Applications (#12-004)

Kids' Plates: Paving the Way for Safe Routes to School (SRTS)

September 18, 2012

10 a.m. - Noon

General Announcements

Before we begin, I need to let everyone know that this webinar is being recorded. The recording will help us in developing our summary of questions and answers for you.

We decided to use the webinar format today vs. just a teleconference to better serve your needs. *Please note that if you do not have the ability to participate on the webinar, you can still join the conversation using the dial-in information provided in the RFA.*

Welcome and Introductions

Welcome to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), Safe and Active Communities Branch, voluntary bidders' webinar for Request for Applications #12-004, entitled, "*Kids' Plates: Paving the Way for Safe Routes to School*". Please note that we will be using the acronym "the RFA" from now on when referring to this Request for Applications.

There are five of us here at HQ participating in this webinar. I am Barb Alberson, Chief of our Branch's Injury Control Section. With me are Pam Shipley, Chief of our Administrative Support Unit, as well as Patti Horsley, Victoria Custodio, and Lisa Rawson, three of our expert Safe Routes to School Technical Assistance Resource Center (TARC) Regional Coordinators. We also have Rose Vingerling, who is our very able TARC program assistant, who is also taking notes for us.

I know you all will be taking your own notes but a summary of today's bidders' webinar will be e-mailed to all of those who received an announcement of the RFA directly from CDPH. It will also be posted on the TARC website. You have the TARC web address – it was included in the RFA within Attachment B (page 32).

Today's Format

First, we will review some important information about this RFA. Next we will answer all questions. We will start with the questions that we have already received. Then we will respond to questions that you post during our webinar. Then, because we know that

there are also potential applicants on the phone who were unable to access the webinar site, we will open it up to callers.

How the webinar's interactive function will work: if at any time you have a question, please feel free to type it in the space provided on your toolbar for QUESTIONS located in the middle of the GoToWebinar toolbar. Because there are so many attendees on the call, we ask that you please mute your phone throughout the session (*6 to mute, #6 to unmute). Remember, you can just type in your questions as we go along. Also, please note: Some of your questions may require additional discussion among state staff, so we may need to put you on hold for a moment while we discuss the question.

In my experience, there is usually a question can't be fully addressed on the spot. That answer will be included in the summary that you will receive afterwards.

Overview and Purpose of this Funding Opportunity

We are so pleased to be able to offer this funding opportunity. *Paving the Way for Safe Routes to School* is seeking applications from eligible entities to develop, implement, and evaluate a set of small-scale, low-cost educational interventions with underserved California schools to improve conditions for walking and bicycling to and from campus. To ensure success, applicants must pre-select five to eight (5-8) elementary and/or middle schools to serve as local intervention sites and have a designated champion at each of the schools.

As a reminder, there will be up to three awards, each of which will receive \$375,000 to conduct a two-year project. RFA materials are posted on the TARC website on the KP RFA page: www.casaferoutestoschool.org/kids-plates-rfa-2012/

The short-term goal of this RFA is to build school capacity to conduct year-round interventions (which must focus on improving safety rather than simply encouraging physical activity). The desired outcome is that each local intervention site will create a calendar outlining its ongoing SRTS activities during the year subsequent to the grant.

The project may focus on schools in one or more communities, in one or more cities, or it may take a county-wide or regional approach (e.g., two neighboring counties). It is anticipated that these small-scale interventions will be important stepping stones in building community and local agency support for more robust SRTS programs.

The project requires a 24-month scope of work; please take careful note of the activities that must be completed within the first six months (e.g., conduct a kick-off event).

Please do pay careful attention to eligibility requirements and minimum qualifications for applicants on pages 9-10 of the RFA [e.g., at least two consecutive years (within the past five) of experience as specified].

Equally important, as described on page 18, your scope of work must include your goals, objectives, activities, timelines, and performance measures/deliverables that will

be conducted during each of the three reporting periods of the grant. Please make sure everything is numbered as shown on the blank template, Attachment C. Grantees are required to collect basic evaluation data in order to assess progress in accomplishing each activity outlined in their Scope of Work. Indicate what evaluation methods you will use such as whether you will be administering pre/post tests, surveys, focus groups, interviews, etc.

Due Dates

We are asking for a Letter of Intent – it is non-binding but important since it will help us to determine how many reviewers we will need for the selection process. Those Letters of Intent are due this Friday (Sept. 21st) and can just be faxed (instructions on page 13 of the RFA). Full applications are due on October 11th by 5 pm. Let me repeat, the applications must be received—not just postmarked—in our office by 5 pm on Thursday, October 11th. Email applications will not be accepted...they must be mailed in to us. We anticipate that awards can be announced on October 29th with a projected start date as of January 1, 2013.

Questions and Answer Session

Once we finish reading the questions that we have received to date, we will open it up to webinar participants using the chat function. We will leave time for questions from callers on the phone that have not been able to join in the webinar.

Budget and Personnel

1. *Is the entire amount of the grant \$375,000, or is it up to \$375,000 for each of the 3 grantees?*

Answer: Each grantee will receive \$375,000 to conduct a two-year project. As a reminder, this project straddles three fiscal years (second half of State FY 2012-13, all of FY 2013-2014, and the first half of FY 2014-2015). Because of this, you need to submit three budgets – one for each FY of the project.

2. *Since this is a 24-month contract term, what would happen to that additional staff after December 2014?*

Answer: This would be a temporary or “limited term” hire if you had no way to continue to support the position with other funding.

3. *Do we have to hire new staff to coordinate and conduct the educational interventions or can we show that we have existing staff that can dedicate a minimum of .5 FTE to this work?*

Answer: Dedicating time of existing staff is fine. Please make it clear in your budget narrative how the time base will be split.

4. *If a community can only identify 3-4 schools who meet the criteria, can they apply for a smaller grant award?*

Answer: No. This RFA is intended for applicants who can work with 5-8 schools.

5. *Can a SRTS champion for the Kids Plates grant be a PTA member, parent or community member? Do they have to be part of the school staff?*

Answer: Any of these folks would be a fine champion so the answer to your first question is yes. However, the applicant must have a letter of commitment from the school principal with a school staff person designated as the lead for this project. This will ensure that the school has embraced SRTS and will work with the champion to implement the project.

Eligibility

6. *The RFA says that the project is to work with sites that have never had a Caltrans Safe Routes to School grant, but how about if they had other grants? We are currently serving a city through a Community Transformation Grant (CTG) and Safe Routes to School is a small part of it. If we apply, will we be less competitive because of the existing CTG grant?*

Answer: NO. You are eligible to apply provided you also meet the additional eligibility criteria of low-income or rural as outlined in the RFA. Our criterion is the receipt of Caltrans SRTS non-infrastructure funding. However, because you have other resources, you must explain how the resources will complement each other.

7. *Several schools in our county participated as part of non-infrastructure grants that were used for either planning or media campaigns, not the "5 Es" for programming. Are such schools still ineligible for the Kids Plates RFA funding?*

Answer: They are not eligible. These schools do not meet the criteria since they have already been recipients of Caltrans non-infrastructure grants.

8. *In the RFP, it states that eligible schools must have "not been a recipient of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) SRTS funding for a non-infrastructure project." Is it ONLY Caltrans NI projects that do not qualify, or does that also apply to FEDERAL Safe Routes to School NI Projects?*

Answer: Yes. Caltrans administers California's SRTS program; it includes both state and federally-funded SRTS grants. Our criteria do not distinguish in terms of source – eligibility for this RFA includes funding under either source. You would be eligible provided you also meet the additional eligibility criteria of low-income or rural as outlined in the RFA.

9. *Are we ineligible if we have been past recipients of SACB grant funds?*

Answer: No. You are still eligible.

10. *May we apply if we are a for-profit agency?*

Answer: Yes. You are eligible to apply but we must warn you that you may not use public funds for profit. It is incumbent upon you to show that this would not be the case (e.g., in your budget displays and budget narrative).

11. *We would like to work with schools that had been designated as “rural in an unincorporated part of the county” but this area has just been annexed to the city. Are they still eligible?*

Answer: It depends. You’ll have to weigh the other criteria in your decision: for example, have those particular schools ever received Caltrans grants? Are they low-income schools? As a reminder, they can be low-income or rural – it does not have to be both.

12. *We have tried contacting schools locally to try to ascertain their status under your definition. Unfortunately, there has been significant changeover of staffing over the years in our district, and some sites are unable to get us this information. Would it be possible for a list of eligible or “ineligible” schools? The map links provided in the RFA are useful in many ways but we need more to identify eligible schools.*

Answer: Yes. We do have additional information available to assist in your decision-making but it is not definitive. Our TARC staff did extensive research and has compiled a cumulative list of past funding cycles – it shows whether a school has “benefited” from SRTS non-infrastructure funding, but not explicitly as to whether they actually received a grant directly. It does not verify eligibility for this RFA. The bottom line: if you have no information on whether or not there was previous SRTS funding, your application will not be strong and thus, may not be very competitive. Caltrans funded list of schools is found on TARC website – there you’ll find a link to the KP RFA page. Again, look to page 32, Attachment B, for the TARC web address.

13. *Would schools in which a grant went directly to the “District” still be eligible?*

Answer: It depends. You are not eligible if the District “divvied” up the funds among its schools for them to conduct their own interventions. In other words, they received Caltrans funding directly. You are eligible to apply if the District conducted the efforts for the schools—even if it was a set of direct interventions. As a reminder, our goals to help the individual schools gain confidence and capacity to conduct SRTS interventions on their own. If your schools are listed by Caltrans as

“received” funding under a district or city led project, the applicant needs to explain the previous work done and how schools are still eligible under this RFA.

14. *It turns out that the city we wanted to write a Safe Routes grant for received \$32,000 of Caltrans SRTS funds in Cycle 2. My understanding is that makes them ineligible for the Kids’ Plate grant. Is that correct?*

Answer: As stated in the RFA, you would be able to work with any schools that have not already been funded under a Caltrans non-infrastructure award. It is similar to the response under question #13 above. It does not matter if the city has received funding. The litmus test is if the city divided up the funds among the schools for their interventions. If this was the case, then NO, this is not a project for you. However, if you can state in your application that the schools you would like to assist have not received Caltrans funds, then those schools would be eligible for this project.

15. *Looking at TIMS statewide collision rankings, is there a threshold point at which sites would not be competitive?*

Answer: It is incumbent upon the applicant to justify which schools to have as participating partners. Remember, our goal is to help launch schools that would benefit greatly but have not really gotten on board yet.

Educational strategies

16. *I would like to know if there are any restrictions to using technology, social media or m-Health to provide education and outreach. Is it OK if our education and outreach strategy is mobile focused?*

Answer: Yes. This is allowable. As the RFA stated, the restriction is in regards to “paid media”. What you are suggesting does not fall into that arena (i.e. there is no media buyer contract, no placement fees, no purchased ad time). Promotion being done electronically on websites using links, games, messaging, banners, etc., are all methods described as educational outreach. Mobile focused education is fine.

That is the last of the questions we received in advance so now it is time to open it up to questions from the audience. This is your time so please do not hesitate to ask. We will start with webinar participants. Please enter your questions in the chat room box and send them to us. (See below.) We will now field questions from callers on line may have who have not been able to join in the webinar. To make sure that we hear your questions clearly, please wait until we call out your region. (See responses below.)

Budget and Personnel

17. *Is it possible to hire two health educators at 25% time instead of one at 50% time?*

Answer: Yes, since these would add up to the minimum requirement for a 50% FTE. However, you have to justify this decision in your application.

18. *Does the \$350.00 per day limit for consultants include travel?*

Answer: No.

19. *Can we provide stipends for teachers or other school employees? Can these be in the form of gift cards?*

Answer: Yes to the first question, No to the second. You may provide stipends for your teachers or other school employees; however, the use of gift cards is not allowed since State funds may not be used to pay for gifts/giveaways.

20. *Can the grant be used to purchase public transit passes for students?*

Answer: The intent of the RFA is to increase the ability of children to safely walk and ride their bikes. Use of public transportation is not within the purview of this grant. However, you might be able to justify it if this strategy would enable children who live too far from campus to go to a “drop off” point within walking distance to the school and be escorted the rest of the way to campus. That said, remember, this RFA focuses on safety, not just encouraging more walking and bicycling.

21. *Can the consultant rates be based on the standard rates in the region?*

Answer: Yes.

22. *Could a proposal include using grant funds to organize carpools and increase vehicle safety around schools for commuter schools?*

Answer: This would not make for a very competitive proposal. Again, the intent is to increase the ability of children to walk and ride bikes safely.

23. *Can funds be used for translation services?*

Answer: Yes.

24. *Can be funds be used to pay for an already existing crossing guard in order to defer school costs?*

Answer: The funds may not be used to pay for an existing guard program since this would be supplanting and it could affect the ability of a program to be sustained. Enhancing that current program (e.g., expanding it and providing better safety

equipment) would be allowed with justification. Funds may be used to start up a new crossing guard program.

25. *My school has had an 85% return on parent surveys because I am able to offer a healthy snack party as an incentive. May grant funds be used to pay for this type of incentive?*

Answer: No. State funds may not be used to purchase food or incentives.

26. *May the funds be used to pay for services at assemblies?*

Answer: Yes.

27. *Is staff training not provided by CDPH still reimbursable?*

Answer: Yes. Any justifiable staff training is reimbursable.

28. *Are there caps on salaries and benefits?*

Answer: Yes. You cannot pay more for staff than the State pays for similar classifications. The Department of Human Resources has salary information available: <http://www.calhr.ca.gov/Pages/home.aspx> (look under “popular links” for job descriptions and pay scales). The current State benefit rate is 39.12%.

29. *Does the previous state moratorium still apply to any purchase of educational materials?*

Answer: It does not apply to all educational materials; it applies to giveaways (prizes, incentives) which may not be purchased with State funds.

Eligibility

30. *Can you please clarify the eligibility for those schools who have received funding from either Federal SRTS NI Grants or Caltrans NI Grants?*

Answer: Again, as stated in response to question #8, schools that have directly received Caltrans SRTS funds for a non-infrastructure project from either source are not eligible for this grant opportunity.

31. *If a school has received an SRTS infrastructure (I) grant, is that school still eligible?*

Answer: Yes. Only those schools who have received non- infrastructure (NI) grants are ineligible.

32. *Are schools that have received CDC Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) grants still eligible?*

Answer: Yes.

33. *Are non-profit organizations that are not part of a school eligible to apply?*

Answer: Yes; however, the schools must embrace the project as their own. You may help them in their capacity-building process but, as a reminder, the desired outcome is the calendar of events that the school commits to conducting after the grant period ends.

34. *If schools received materials and prizes, but not funds from a Caltrans NI grant are they still eligible?*

Answer: Yes.

35. *Can school districts apply?*

Answer: Yes.

36. *Are charter schools eligible?*

Answer: Yes.

37. *Are schools eligible if they benefited from a Caltrans NI grant in the past?*

Answer: It depends. If schools received the funds directly, then they are not eligible, but if they “benefitted” in that they received services and programs stemming from a grant awarded to another organization, they are eligible.

38. *Are schools, non-profit organizations, and government agency all able to apply?*

Answer: Yes.

39. *Do schools that are both rural and low-income have more likelihood of winning the grant?*

Answer: No. There are no extra points awarded for schools that are both rural and low-income.

40. *How large must a school’s population be in order to be eligible for this grant?*

Answer: There is no minimum or maximum number of students that must attend a school in order for the school to be eligible.

41. *Can you clarify the geographic lines that will be used to differentiate between Northern, Central and Southern California for the purposes of this grant?*

Answer: For the purposes of this RFA, “Northern California” will include the counties located in Caltrans Districts 1-4; “Central California” will include counties in Caltrans Districts 5,6,9, and 10; “Southern California” will include counties in Caltrans Districts 7, 8, 11, and 12. To see what counties are in each District, please visit: www.casaferoutestoschool.org/contact-us/

42. *Can the five to eight schools included in the project be a mix of both rural and low-income schools?*

Answer: Yes.

43. *Is it correct to assume that if 75% of children at a school receive Free or Reduced Price Meals (FRPM), that the school is considered low-income?*

Answer: Yes. For the purposes of this RFA, a low-income school is defined as one in which 75% or more of the students are eligible for the California Department of Education’s FRPM program.

44. *Are you looking for schools that don’t have much SRTS experience?*

Answer: Yes. Underserved schools are the focus of this RFA. We want to encourage on-going SRTS activities in schools that have not participated previously—or have only participated to a limited extent.

45. *Must schools be geographically close in order to be eligible?*

Answer: No. Schools do not have to be close to each other as long as an applicant can justify why choosing those particular schools makes sense.

Contracts

46. *What is included in “direct costs” vs. “indirect costs”?*

Answer: Direct costs include all of your actual costs for personnel as well as your operating expenses (e.g., office supplies, rent, telephone and travel). Indirect costs are overhead costs that are not directly identifiable to the applicant or the project and are generally expressed as a percentage of total personnel costs. (See pages 19-20 of the RFA.)

47. *During the 1st six months, may we buy supplies and materials for the duration of the project?*

Answer: Yes.

48. *The first FY is just six months long – Can we have a sub-contract with our schools that crosses FYs? And if so, can they carry over funds from one FY to the next?*

Answer: It would be possible to have a multi-year contract, but specific language would need to be included about the availability of funds being contingent upon the passage of the Governor's budget, and in sufficient amount, etc. Separate budgets would be required to coincide with the applicable state fiscal year periods.

And, no, there can be no carryover of funds from one fiscal year to the next. These funds must be spent in the same year in which they are appropriated.

49. *It says in the RFA under General Expenses that we may buy minor equipment. Does that include a computer (laptop) and an LCD projector?*

Answer: The purchase of computers is not allowed. An LCD projector would be an admissible purchase with justification.

50. *Since we would be required to present at the National SRTS Conference next summer, should we include travel to this event in our budget or will CDPH support this travel with other resources?*

Answer: Please include this travel in your budget. We may be able to identify another source of funding for this travel but we will not know for months yet.

Letters of Commitment and Other Miscellaneous Questions

51. *Do the letters of commitment from the school have to be specific?*

Answer: The more specific, the better! They should at a minimum address the school's commitment to work towards on-going SRTS activities subsequent to the grant period.

52. *Can a champion serve multiple schools?*

Answer: Yes.

53. *If a superintendent is awarded this grant must we still provide letters of commitment from the principals of the schools involved?*

Answer: Yes. We need to see buy-in from each of the principals indicating that they are committed to the success of the project on their campus.

54. *Would you like to see commitment letters from school board members?*

Answer: Letters of support are not required under this RFA and will not be scored separately. That said, letters from school board members and other decision makers indicating strong interest in helping your project to succeed could be imbedded into your narrative discussion.

55. *Is there a template for the letter of intent?*

Answer: No. There is no template. The information that should be included is outlined on page 13 of the RFA. The purpose of the Letter of Intent is to give us an idea as to how many applications we will be receiving and how many reviewers we will need.

56. *Do we need to define the five to eight schools in our letter of intent?*

Answer: No. We just need to know that you are going to submit a project application.

57. *Will this grant be available in the future?*

Answer: While the Kids' Plates Program will continue, the projects for which the funds are allocated shift from year to year. We have not yet determined what childhood injury prevention topics will be considered in the next cycle.

58. *Is there any information available about past recipients and their proposals?*

Answer: No. This is the first Kids' Plates grant opportunity of this magnitude that is exclusively for SRTS projects.

Closing

A summary of today's questions and answers will be emailed to those who received the announcement of the RFA. The summary will also be posted on the TARC website.

We look forward to seeing your applications on October 11th.

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